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Eleventh United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names
New York, 8-17 August 2017
Items 5 and 9 of the provisional agenda*

Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the Tenth Conference (for distribution only)

National standardization

Geographical name databases used for the benefit of sustainable development and national intangible heritage: National Institute of Cartography and Remote Sensing

Summary**

Toponymy, when applied to a country, region, city or other geographical territory, refers to the entire collection of names assigned to each and every component entity of such a territory. These names are studied from various angles: their origin, their meaning, the circumstances of their attribution to the places they identify, their linguistic evolution and the way they are used at the local, regional, national and international levels.

Toponymy is a science that draws primarily on geography, history and linguistics. Other disciplines, such as sociology, anthropology, cartography and even geopolitics, are also relevant to a proper understanding of the importance of the two core functions of toponymy: identifying places and using names to convey information.

As the body responsible for Algerian cartography and for promoting its use in various sectors and activities, the National Institute of Cartography and Remote Sensing has been working since its establishment to collect reliable multi-scale toponymic information that accurately reflects the reality on the ground and the specificities of Algeria's geography, and to organize the information into databases. It also advocates for the dissemination of that information for global use.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full text, prepared by Hassen Abdellaoui, Director General of the National Institute of Cartography and Remote Sensing (Algeria), is available in the language of submission only from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html (document E/CONF.105/11/CRP.11).

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The Algerian toponymic database, at different scales, is employed in various sectors and by various research applications and projects. It is updated incrementally as map coverage progresses. Standardization of the database is of crucial importance and has been accorded the highest priority in the national research programme.

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Item 15 of the provisional agenda*
Country names

List of country names

Summary**

The report contains the names of 194 countries in the language or languages used in an official capacity within each country. The names are provided in two forms: short names, which are the ones in common use (whether official or not), and formal names, which are those used in an official diplomatic context. The names are presented in their native scripts, and non-Roman scripts are romanized according to systems approved by the United Nations where they are available.

The report also contains the short and formal names of each country in the six official languages of the United Nations. That information was extracted from the United Nations Terminology Database (available from http://unterm.un.org), which is the authoritative source for country names used at the United Nations.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Élisabeth Calvarin (France) and Leo Dillon (United States of America), Co-Convenors, Working Group on Country Names. The report will be available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/13/CRP.13.

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Reports by Governments on the situation in their countries and on the progress made in the standardization of geographical names since the Tenth Conference (for distribution only)

Report of Sweden

Summary**

The national report of Sweden is divided into 11 sections. The first, on national standardization, contains a short overview of current legislation and of the main authorities involved in the standardization of geographical names. The second, on names in multilingual areas, provides comments on minority language names and the responsible authorities. The third section addresses amendments to the legislation on place names in Sweden. The fourth presents a revised version of a booklet on good place-name practice and refers to a more exhaustive presentation in a separate working paper. The fifth indicates how the implementation of the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage is organized in Sweden. The sixth provides an overview of the development of place names from medieval parishes to the names of modern districts (established in 2016), which still preserve the old names. The seventh focuses on so-called statistical localities in Sweden, a dynamic and changing concept that often arouses discussions about names and causes problems. The eighth provides information about new names of buildings that have expanded the place-name register and made many names of buildings available for other users, for example, emergency and rescue services. The ninth presents a newly formed working group called The Geographical Names Network. The tenth indicates that the Place-Name Advisory Board is trying to find ways to implement United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names resolution X/4 of 2012 on discouraging the commercialization of geographical names (see E/CONF.101/144). The eleventh section provides a list of articles and books on place names and the standardization of place names written by Swedish experts from 2012 to 2016.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Leila Mattfolk, Staffan Nyström, Annette Torensjö and Ebba Berling Åselius. The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/14/CRP.14.

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The following resolutions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names are particularly relevant to work on the standardization of names in Sweden:

- 1972: resolution II/36 on problems of minority languages (see E/CONF.105/14/CRP.14, in particular sects. 1-3)
- 2002: resolution VIII/9 on geographical names as cultural heritage (see E/CONF.105/14/CRP.14, in particular sects. 1 and 4-6)
- 2007: resolution IX/4 on geographical names as intangible cultural heritage (see E/CONF.105/14/CRP.14, in particular sects. 1 and 4-6)
- 2012: resolution X/4 on discouraging the commercialization of geographical names (see E/CONF.105/14/CRP.14, in particular sect. 10).

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National and international meetings, conferences, symposiums, publicity and publications

Report of the International Hydrographic Organization

Summary**

The International Hydrographic Organization (IHO) is an intergovernmental consultative and technical organization of 87 member States that was established in 1921 to support the safety of navigation and the protection of the marine environment. One of its main objectives is to bring about the greatest possible uniformity in nautical charts and publications (paper and digital) and in the development of marine spatial data infrastructures.

IHO does not consider itself as a naming authority as such, but is involved in the development of hydrographic standards, data modelling, feature concept dictionary registers, dictionaries of specific terms, gazetteers and charting, among other things, including the consideration of naming issues.

The report provides an update on the activities relating to the naming of undersea features and the publication *Limits of Oceans and Seas*.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by the Assistant Director, Charting and Services, of the secretariat of the International Hydrographic Organization in Monaco, Yves Guillam. The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the languages of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/15/CRP.15.

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Item 11 of the provisional agenda*
Exonyms

Exonym use: globally common characteristics and criteria

Summary**

In its resolution VIII/4, adopted at the Eighth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in Berlin in 2002, the Conference created the Working Group on Exonyms of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and developed guidelines for ensuring a politically sensitive use of exonyms as one of its major tasks. The Working Group undertook many efforts to comply with that task, including at the:

(a) Second meeting of the Working Group, held in Prague in 2003;

(b) Ninth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in New York in 2007, at which a detailed list of criteria for the use of exonyms was presented and discussed;

(c) Eighth meeting of the Working Group, held in Timişoara, Romania, in 2008, at which the list of criteria was again discussed and modified;

(d) Twenty-fifth session of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names, held in Nairobi in 2009, at which the attempt to propose a reduced version of the list as a model for a resolution failed;

(e) Tenth meeting of the Working Group, held in Tainach, Austria, in 2010, at which the aim was no longer to prepare a resolution, but to produce an advisory handout or brochure.

At the seventeenth meeting of the Working Group, held in Zagreb in 2015, after an exhaustive discussion, the Working Group reaffirmed the preference expressed at the tenth meeting of avoiding a normative approach. To that end, it was found to be necessary to depart from empirical studies on the use of exonyms in various parts of the world, and, in that regard, at the nineteenth meeting, held in Prague in April 2017, 16 papers were presented. Based on its findings, the Working Group developed, in a general debate, a list of globally common characteristics and criteria for exonym use.

The criteria primarily note the circumstances in which exonyms are currently used, but may also serve as guidelines for exonym use in future.

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* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Peter Jordan (Austria), Convener, Working Group on Exonyms. The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/16/CRP.16.

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Exonyms

The endonym/exonym divide — questions resolved and still open at the fifteenth anniversary of the Working Group on Exonyms

Summary**

On the occasion of the fifteenth anniversary of the Working Group on Exonyms, the report highlights achievements of the Working Group as well as questions still open. The achievements include the series of workshops held on the margins of the sessions of the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and United Nations conferences, at which about 30 participants from up to 20 countries always participated, and which functioned as forums for serious discussions on the endonym/exonym divide and criteria for the use of exonyms. Ten workshops of this kind were organized from 2003 to 2017 in various places. What provided these workshops with special added value was the participation not only of scientists, but also of former experts from the Group of Experts, who had ceased to be delegates of their countries to sessions of the Group, but improved the events with their valuable experience and expertise. Another achievement is very likely the series of proceedings emanating from the workshops and the precise documentation of discussions and findings. These achievements compensate in part the lack of results in terms of resolutions, recommendations and guidelines — the conventional "products" of the Group of Experts and its working groups. Indeed, the only outcome of the Working Group in this conventional respect are the new definitions of endonym and exonym, as documented in the amended version of the Group of Experts glossary of terms. While the new definitions avoid the shortcomings of their predecessors as to overlap, they were again soon criticized for being unpractical for purposes of standardization.

The report addresses the following questions that still need to be resolved:

- Do place names differ from the official names only by the omission, addition or alteration of diacritics or the article? Do they differ from the official names only by declension or derivation? Are they created by the translation only of

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Peter Jordan (Austria), Convenor, Working Group on Exonyms, and is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/17/CRP.17.

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the generic term to be regarded as exonyms?

- Does phonetical transcription create exonyms?
- Can the endonym/exonym divide be confined to the written form of the name?
- Is there need for an additional term for sea names?
- Is the endonym/exonym divide solely defined by the spatial/territorial relation between the community using the name and the feature marked by this name?
- Where does a community's own territory end when the endonym is defined as the name attributed to features on a community's own territory?
- What is an indigenous community? For how many generations must it be present in its current homeland to qualify as indigenous?
- How can exonyms be categorized? Various aspects may be relevant, for example, the feature category, semantics, linguistic configuration and the relation to the endonym.

- For exclusively historical features without an equivalent in the present
- For a composed endonym with a transparent generic component, which can be translated
- For an endonym that is difficult to pronounce by a speaker of German
- For endonyms in a language not frequently learned in Austria.

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Activities of the joint International Cartographic Association/International Geographical Union Commission on Toponymy since 2012

Summary**

The report provides the highlights of the activities of the joint International Cartographic Association/International Geographical Union Commission on Toponymy since the Tenth United Nations Conference on the Standardization of Geographical Names, held in 2012.

The Commission is a joint venture of the two global umbrella institutions of cartography and geography, namely, the International Cartographic Association and the International Geographical Union, and was founded in 2011. Its main goal is to foster toponymic research in the fields of geography and cartography, complementary to multidisciplinary forums such as the United Nations Group of Experts on Geographical Names and the International Council of Onomastic Sciences. To this end, it organizes scientific events and publishes the proceedings thereof. During the period 2012-2017, the Commission organized or co-organized 16 symposiums and sessions in the framework of conferences in 10 countries spanning five continents. It also supported the publication of four proceedings, with a fifth in process. The Commission's flagship project is the establishment of a geographical names consortium of several universities, at which courses in toponymy will be offered, following a common curriculum approved by the Commission and taught by lecturers, among others, from the Commission.

* E/CONF.105/1.

** The full report was prepared by Peter Jordan (Austria), International Cartographic Association Chair, joint International Cartographic Association/International Geographical Union Commission on Toponymy. The report is available from http://unstats.un.org/unsd/geoinfo/UNGEGN/ungegnConf11.html, in the language of submission only, as document E/CONF.105/19/CRP.19.

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